

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 NRC-05 FEAE-00 DODE-00

ERDA-05 SS-15 SP-02 PM-04 /093 W

-----171957Z 112517 /73

R 171216Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0312

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 06237

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, ENRG, BE

SUBJECT: BELGIAN VIEWS ON U.S. NUCLEAR POLICY

REF: (A) STATE 133489, (B) STATE 122509

1. WE PRESENTED REFTEL A TALKING POINTS TO FONTAINE AND HERPELS OF FOREIGN MINISTRY'S SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS OFFICE ON JUNE 16. THEY LISTENED WITH GREAT ATTENTIVENESS, AND WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED TO UNDERSTAND PRECISELY OUR POSITION RELATIVE TO INDEFINITE DEFERRAL OF COMMERCIAL REPROCESSING IN THE U.S., AND OUR GROUNDS FOR QUESTIONING THE ADVANTAGES OF RECYCLING PLUTONIUM IN LIGHT WATER REACTORS. HERPELS REMARKED RELATIVE TO DEFERRAL OF COMMERCIAL REPROCESSING THAT WHILE IT IS RELATIVELY EASY TO HALT OPERATIONS AND RESEARCH, IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO START UP AGAIN ONCE A DETERMINATION IS MADE THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO DO SO. THE TIME AND INVESTMENT LOST WOULD IN FACT BE MUCH GREATER THAN THE PERIOD OF DEFERRAL ALONE IMPLIES.

2. AS FOR RECYCLING OF PLUTONIUM IN LWR'S, HERPELS SAID THAT WHILE IT MAY BE THE CASE THAT THERE IS LITTLE OR NO DIRECT ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE TO PLUTONIUM RECYCLING (REFTEL A, PARA 4), THE REASON BELGIUM IS PROCEEDING WITH
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THE PLUTONIUM CYCLE IS NOT SO MUCH ECONOMIC AS IT IS TO BETTER ASSURE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF NUCLEAR FUEL AND TO ATTAIN A GREATER DEGREE OF ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY. FURTHERMORE, BELGIUM SEES ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGES FROM THE STANDPOINT OF PHYSICAL SECURITY TO BEING ACTIVE IN THE ENTIRE NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE AT INTEGRATED SITES, THEREBY ELIMINATING MANY OF THE DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH

PHYSICAL TRANSFER OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS, ESPECIALLY SPENT FUEL.

3. ON THE SUBJECT OF THE NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION (INFCEP), THE BELGIANS REITERATED THEIR INTEREST AND INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM. THEY LOOK FORWARD TO BEING KEPT INFORMED ON A CURRENT BASIS OF THE RESULTS OF MEETINGS SUCH AS THAT OF THE SEVEN SUMMIT COUNTRIES ON JUNE 8-9. EC MEMBERS WILL FIRST BE COORDINATING THEIR INTENDED ROLES IN INFCEP AT THE EC LEVEL TO DETERMINE WHAT AREAS EURATOM IS COMPETENT TO WORK IN. AFTER THAT IS AGREED UPON AMONG THE NINE, THEY WILL CONSIDER ADDITIONAL AREAS IN WHICH MEMBER COUNTRIES MIGHT WORK. ONE POSSIBLE AREA OF INTEREST FOR THE BELGIANS WOULD BE SPECTRAL SHIFT MODIFICATIONS (REFTEL B, PARA 2.G.11), BECAUSE BELGIUM IS COLLABORATING WITH THE UK IN THIS AREA THROUGH THE VULCAN PROJECT. HERPELS ALSO ASKED US TO NOTE THAT SOME OF THE SUBJECTS SUGGESTED FOR INFCEP ARE ALREADY BEING HANDLED IN EUROPE, AND THIS FACT SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN PLANNING. IN PARTICULAR SHE MENTIONED PARAGRAPH 2.G.3 AND 2.G.4. EURODIF AND EURINCO ARE EXAMPLES ALREADY IN EXISTENCE OF SIGNIFICANT "JOINT PLANNING TO ENSURE ADEQUATE CAPACITY" AND "MULTINATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS" OF THE TYPE APPARENTLY CONTEMPLATED IN OUR REVISED APPROACH PAPER. CHAMBERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR ENERGY, POLICIES, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BRUSSE06237
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770217-0521
Format: TEL
From: BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770647/aaaaboxe.tel
Line Count: 88
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 133489, 77 STATE 122509
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2117455
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BELGIAN VIEWS ON U.S. NUCLEAR POLICY
TAGS: TECH, ENRG, PARM, BE, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8911fc7a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009